

Your County in Touch

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The County's annual Family Day Festival drew around 500 people to Alexander Hamilton Park on the February 20 holiday for free outdoor fun.

Land Use Bylaw public open houses

Lac La Biche County Council has been reviewing the municipality's Land Use Bylaw (LUB), and the time has come to seek public input.

The LUB is a critical piece of legislation that determines what types of development are allowed on different properties throughout the County. Two open houses have been scheduled to obtain feedback from residents before the draft bylaw moves forward.

Topics that have generated interest in the past include work camp regulations and downtown parking requirements.

The open house in Plamondon will take place from 5-7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 8 at the Festival Centre. The one in Lac La Biche will be on March 9 from 5-7 p.m., in the McArthur Room at McArthur Place.

Family and Community Support Services relocating to the Bold Center, expanding community outreach

This spring will be a time of transition for the County's Family and Community Support Services department, with new staff positions, new programs, a new social media presence, and a new home.

The department recently hired a second Community Outreach Worker, broke new ground in seniors and youth programming, created an official Facebook page, and is moving to the Bold Center. The changes are many, but are allowing Lac La Biche County FCSS to expand its services and better meet the needs of the community.

With two Community Outreach Workers on the roster, the department is making good on its commitment to serve the area's seniors and youth. Last month, FCSS staff members facilitated an Elder Abuse Prevention Workshop at McArthur Place, and a "Mental Health

101" seminar in partnership with Alberta Health Services for parents with teenagers. Both were first-time events — and more new programs are planned for the near future (see page 3 for more details).

To highlight programs and services, a Facebook page specifically for FCSS has also been created. Content and updates are posted regularly at www.facebook.com/llbcountyfcss.

While changes are afoot, FCSS continues to offer all of its existing services but is moving to a new location. Starting Monday, March 6, the department will be based at the Bold Center.

FCSS also has new community grant application forms and deadlines. For more details, call (780) 623-6819 or e-mail fcss@laclabichedcounty.com.

County fire restriction levels

Signs on major highways entering the County indicate what municipal fire restrictions are currently in effect.

Note: Burning within hamlet boundaries is always forbidden.

1. No Fire Restriction

Permits are required but no special restrictions are in place.

2. Fire Restriction

Burn permits might be suspended, or certain types of burning might be prohibited (e.g. no heavy fuels).

3. Fire Ban

No burning of any kind is allowed, including campfires. All burn permits are suspended.

These are municipal restrictions the County uses to prevent wildfires. Alberta Agriculture and Forestry uses a similar but more complex system in the areas for which it is responsible. Go to wildfire.alberta.ca for more information about provincial restrictions.



Fire season begins, permits now required for burning

Spring is just around the corner and that means fire season has begun.

From March 1 until October 31, permits are required for all burning, except for campfires. Residents will need to apply to either Lac La Biche County or Alberta Agriculture and Forestry for permits, depending on which area of the municipality they live in. A map of the permitting zones can be found on the County's website.

To apply for a burn permit from the County, call (780) 623-6767. To contact Alberta Agriculture and Forestry, call (780) 623-5388.

In addition to permits, the authorities can announce different restrictions when conditions change and accidental wildfires become more likely (*see sidebar at left for more information on restrictions*). If threat levels increase, all burning activities might be prohibited.

The permitting process and restrictions are put in place during fire season to protect the community and the environment. Call the County's Protective Services department at (780) 623-6767 if you have questions or need more information.

What can you do to help?

1. Obey all current fire restrictions, and abide by the conditions listed on burn permits.
2. Inspect old burn sites to make sure that previous fires are completely extinguished.
3. Never leave a campfire burning unattended, and make sure it is fully extinguished before you leave the site.
4. Protect your property using FireSmart practices, like pruning trees and keeping grass cut short. To find out more, pick up a free manual at the County Centre or McArthur Place.

Lac La Biche County takes fire season and community protection very seriously, and the penalties for non-compliance with regulations will be strictly enforced. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

County pushing for revisions to Alberta Fishing Regulations

Lac La Biche County is lobbying the provincial government to amend fishing regulations and help municipalities in northeastern Alberta reach their tourism goals.

The County has sent letters to Alberta Environment and Parks officials, asking to reconsider the no-catch restrictions on walleye fishing in the region. Such a change would make the County a more attractive destination for anglers.

"We are asking the provincial government to look at opening

between 10 and 15 lakes in the area for walleye fishing, and then monitoring and stocking them if needed," said Mayor Omer Moghrabi. "Recent public meetings have shown that residents and visitors are keen to see a change like this, and our County is committed to developing its tourism base."

A wider array of fishing options is an important step towards realizing the community's outdoor recreation potential. The County also sent letters to neighbouring municipalities, asking for their lobbying support.

Councillors on the road to AAMDC convention

The annual Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) convention is set to take place March 20-22.

AAMDC is an organization that advocates on behalf of the province's rural municipalities, and the annual convention is a prime opportunity to meet with provincial ministers.

Lac La Biche County councillors have requested meetings to discuss Highway 858, mental health resources in rural Alberta, fishing regulations and the province's Rural Development Strategy, among other subjects.



The state of Highway 858, which turns to gravel 18 km north of Plamondon, is a topic for lobbying.



FROM THE COUNTY COUNCIL TABLE: Off-site levies will no longer be charged

Council has given three readings to a bylaw that stops the charging of off-site levies in Lac La Biche County.

Off-site levies are fees the County collects when landowners subdivide or develop properties in designated areas. The dollars have been used to help pay for water and sewer lines and roads in those areas, but the levy system has been criticized as inconsistent and restrictive.

Council and County Administration will consider alternative available options for recouping costs.

Mandatory connections bylaw gets first reading

Council has also given first reading to a bylaw that will make water and sewer connections mandatory in areas where the underground utilities can be accessed.

The draft bylaw is designed to help the County start recovering the costs of installing and maintaining infrastructure, while protecting the environment by requiring that residents use sanitary sewer services where possible.

Go to www.laclabichedcounty.com to read complete Council Highlights and stay up-to-date on Council's decisions.



County serves up cooking class for local teenagers

How much thyme does it take teenagers to learn cooking skills? Only three days, if they take the County's Teens In The Kitchen course.

The course, running April 11-13, is a recipe to teach emerging chefs about food preparation, healthy eating options and how to get the most for their money when shopping for ingredients.

The course costs \$25 and is designed for kitchen aficionados ages 13 and up. Call the County's Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) department at (780) 623-6754 for more information.



Tax return filing assistance available for seniors

Low-income seniors with simple tax situations can get help filing their 2016 income tax returns.

Through the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program, the County's FCSS staff members can assist seniors with the tax paperwork. Call (780) 623-6726.

The filing deadline is April 30, 2017.



Lac La Biche County
welcoming by nature.

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An electronic version of this newsletter is available. All you need to do is call (780) 623-1747 or provide your e-mail address to intouch@lACLAbichecounty.com.

Use the same contact information for any address changes, additional copies or to unsubscribe.



Dates to Remember

March 8-9

Public consultation sessions on draft Land Use Bylaw in Plamondon and Lac La Biche.

March 12

Daylight Saving begins.

March 18

"The First Few Steps: Developing Emotional Intelligence in Youth" workshop. Call (780) 623-6754 for more information.

March 20

First day of spring.



Celebrate Nutrition Month at the Bold Center

March is Nutrition Month, and staff members at the Bold Center are working with partnering agencies to deliver informative programs for residents.

Recreation department employees have organized a Healthy Bites recipe contest. Community members can submit their healthy recipes, and the person whose recipe earns the most "likes" on the Bold Center's Facebook page will win a prize. Other programs and workshops include

Access Fitness for Youth, Fat & Sugar Shocker Lunch & Learns, Healthy Backs, a community taste testing and more. Visit boldcenter.ca/programs for full details and descriptions of all workshops and seminars throughout the month.

For more information, call the Bold Center's front desk at (780) 623-3829. Participants must wear proper fitness attire and clean indoor running shoes.

Pickleball demonstrations and workshops

Have you ever wondered how pickleball is played? Pickleball is a racquet sport, like tennis and badminton, that was invented in the 1960s and has been growing in popularity ever since. The origin of the sport's name is a bit of a mystery, but many believe it was named after a cocker spaniel named Pickles.

The Bold Center is hosting two free workshops to teach the basics of pickleball. The first will be on Monday, March 6 at 10:30 a.m. and the second will be on Friday, March 10 at 5:30 p.m. Equipment will be provided, while supplies last.

50+ Walk On program continuing

The Bold Center and Alberta Health Services have partnered to deliver the 50+ Walk On program, which means free access to the Canadian Natural Walking Track on the top floor of the multiplex.

The program is ideal for older citizens who might not feel comfortable going for a walk outdoors. Sessions take place Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, from 9-10:30 a.m.